

Minutes
Catawba County Board of Commissioners
Regular Session, Monday, November 20, 2006, 7:00 p.m.

Appointments

Juvenile Crime Prevention Council	448	11/20/06
Transportation Advisory Board	448	11/20/06

Board of Commissioners

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Closed Session

Pursuant to GS 143-318.11(a)(6) to consider qualifications of an employee	452	11/20/06
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Communications

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IT

Sole Source Exemption – Lease/Purchase Voice Over Internet Protocol Phone System	449	11/20/06
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Lake Norman Marine Commission

Funding for Navigational Aids	449	11/20/06
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Proclamations

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Purchasing

Bid Award for 35 Ton Articulating Dump Truck	448	11/20/06
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The Catawba County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, November 20, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. in the 1924 Courthouse, Robert E. Hibbits Meeting Room, 30 North College Avenue, Newton, North Carolina.

Present were Chair Katherine W. Barnes, Vice-Chair Dan Hunsucker and Commissioners Glenn E. Barger and Barbara G. Beatty.

Commissioner Lynn M. Lail was absent.

Also present were County Manager J. Thomas Lundy, Assistant County Manager Joellen Daley, Assistant County Manager Lee Worsley, Interim County Attorney Debra Bechtel, Attorney Anne Marie Pease and County Clerk Barbara Morris.

1. Chair Katherine W. Barnes called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.
2. Vice-Chair Dan Hunsucker led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
3. Chair Barnes offered the invocation.
4. Commissioner Glenn E. Barger made a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting and Closed Session of November 6, 2006 and the Special Work Session of November 7, 2006. The motion carried unanimously.
5. Recognition of Special Guests: Chair Barnes welcomed everyone present. She introduced and welcomed the new reporter from the Observer News Enterprise, Nathan Brown. Commissioner

Barbara Beatty recognized Paul Carter who is a new member of the Lake Norman Marine Commission. Mr. Carter came forward and thanked the Board for the appointment and said he was honored to represent the County.

6. Comments for Items not on the Agenda.

Mr. Bruce Kiser, who lives in Austin Adult Care, came forward to address the Board regarding his concern for himself and others who reside in adult care homes in the County. Mr. Kiser itemized the lack of menu choices, the quality of the food and disrepair of the showers as areas of concern. Mr. Kiser requested the Board to remember those who live in these homes. Chair Barnes asked Mr. Kiser if he had met with the Ombudsman regarding his concerns and he indicated he had but was not pleased with the results.

The Home & Hospice Care Proclamation was presented at this point and then comments for items not on the agenda continued. Commissioner Barger presented Lee Harlow, Charge Nurse II, Home Health with the Home & Hospice Care Proclamation. This proclamation recognized that in-home health, hospice, and community-based services provide for an individual's health and social needs throughout life; compassionate care which serves expectant mothers, infants, children, adults, the disabled and elderly, and provides love, comfort, and support at the end of life. In-home health, hospice, and community based services enable North Carolina's citizens to access a wide variety of quality health and social services, including preventive care, acute care, sustainable long-term care and palliative care. These services are provided by home health agencies, licensed home care agencies, hospice agencies, adult day care, adult day health care facilities, and home medical equipment companies. Ms. Harlow thanked the Board for the recognition and stated that her agency saw over 900 residents in the County and drove over 22,000 miles in the last year to provide those services. They were recently recognized as Home Care Elite for 2006 which meant that they are one of the top 25 agencies in the United States.

Mr. Chad Franklin from Cognitive Connection and Ms. Reva Cook, Drug Court Administrator, addressed the Board regarding their concerns related to the availability of drug paraphernalia in convenience stores as well as the availability to teenagers of over the counter drugs which contain dextromethorphan (DMX). Mr. Franklin and Ms. Cook expressed their desire to make the sale of the drug paraphernalia illegal and the enactment of some restrictions on the quantity of products containing DMX that a teenage may purchase. Chair Barnes asked if there was a draft bill regarding this issue and Mr. Franklin said there was none at this time. Commissioner Beatty suggested they visit the legislators to present these same issues and request their assistance. Chair Barnes indicated that this matter would be discussed with the County's delegation to the North Carolina Legislature and said she was hopeful the press would pick up on this issue and let parents know what was happening.

7. Appointments:

Vice-Chair Hunsucker recommended the appointment of Captain Jay Jackson from the Hickory Police Department for an unexpired term to replace Captain Dan Carlson as the Police Chief Designee on the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council. Captain Jackson's term will expire June 30, 2007. Commissioner Betty recommended the appointment of Gigi Robinson for a first term to replace Paul Helton on the Transportation Advisory Board. Ms. Robinson's term will expire on December 31, 2008. These recommendations came in the form of a motion. The motion carried unanimously.

8. Consent Agenda:

County Manager J. Thomas Lundy presented the following two items under the consent agenda:

- a. Request to award a bid for a 35 Ton Articulating Dump Truck to be used at the landfill. Four bids were received and the low bidder was James River Equipment. The requested action by the Board was to award the bid to James River Equipment as follows and approve the trade-in of a 2000 John Deere Dump Truck that had about 2100 hours on it.

<u>James River Equipment</u>		John Deere 350D
Base Bid	\$334,337.00	
Full Coverage Warranty	\$ 2,790.00	
Power Train Warranty	<u>\$ 13,000.00</u>	
Total	\$350,127.00	

Less Trade-in	<u>\$ 85,000.00</u>
Net Bid	\$265,127.00

- b. Request from the Lake Norman Marine Commission for \$15,000 for the maintenance and expansion of the navigational system on Lake Norman. Catawba County, along with Lincoln, Iredell and Mecklenburg counties, formed the Lake Norman Marine Commission and the legislative authority requires that the Marine Commission be funded at the same level by all four counties. Iredell, Mecklenburg and Lincoln counties have already considered the request by the Lake Norman Marine Commission. Iredell and Mecklenburg Counties approved their \$15,000 contribution. Lincoln County has also approved a \$15,000 contribution with the stipulations that (1) the other three counties contribute and (2) the Marine Commission furnish a separate list of the navigational aids to be maintained and purchased in the Lincoln County portion of Lake Norman. The Finance and Personnel Subcommittee recommended that the Board of Commissioners agree to appropriate up to \$15,000 for navigational aids on the Catawba County portion of Lake Norman and that the funds be granted under the following conditions: (1) the other three counties participate; (2) the funds are used for the purchase of only navigational aids on the Catawba County side; and (3) the County be invoiced for the aids on the Catawba County side at whatever pace the Marine Commission desires. Commissioner Beatty confirmed that the funds would remain with Catawba County until invoiced. Chair Barnes noted there was also a condition that the location of the navigational aids be shown on the County's GIS if possible. Commissioner Beatty suggested adding a condition of quarterly updates on the repair, replacement and expansion of the navigational aids. Chair Barnes confirmed the additional conditions and asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda. Commissioner Beatty made the motion to approve the consent agenda and the motion carried unanimously.

9. Departmental Reports:

IT/Communications Center. Terry Bledsoe, Chief Information Officer and Debbie Anderson, Purchasing Agent presented a request for the Board to authorize the sole source exemption for the purchase of a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) phone system from BellSouth.

Catawba County entered into an agreement with BellSouth for countywide Centrex service in October 2000. The agreement was renewed for an additional three-year term in January 2005. Before renewing the Centrex agreement, county staff researched the possibility of a VoIP system, however, the costs were prohibitive at the time.

The County currently has three separate phone systems for agencies included in this project other than Centrex located at the Sheriff Department, Mental Health First Plaza, Register of Deeds. This proposal will allow for the combination of all of these systems.

Voice over IP (also called VoIP, IP Telephony, and Internet telephony) refers to technology that enables routing of voice conversations over the wide area network (WAN) or any other IP network. The voice data flows over a general-purpose packet-switched network, instead of the traditional dedicated, circuit-switched voice transmission lines. VoIP, being IP application based, enables communication devices to interoperate with Internet services such as email, instant messaging, calendars, and other collaboration applications. The simplicity of VoIP makes it especially suited for the development of new business applications that have the power to increase efficiency.

BellSouth and Cisco have partnered to make an offer to Catawba County to deploy VoIP. They are offering the technology available with a VoIP system and to upgrade our local area network for close to the same monthly cost we are currently paying Bellsouth for Centrex service.

A Return on Investment (ROI) study was completed using the current amount being paid for phone services using Centrex and compared the cost against monthly costs of VoIP plus equipment lease/purchase. The study showed a \$2,156.04 savings per month during the first year. This savings includes replacing all of the phones, call centers, and switches', including the core switches for the data network.

There will be an additional cost per month, during years 2 through 5, if full maintenance is used. This would increase the monthly amount during years 2 to 5 by \$2,243.96 a month from the current cost of phone service for the County. In order to avoid the additional cost, staff will work to develop expertise to assume maintenance internally for everything except the core and the call centers. It should be noted that with the Centrex system being used now, the County does not have maintenance. Phone maintenance is on a per incidence basis and was not calculated. Therefore, those costs were not included in the ROI.

The ROI also did not include any calculations for phones and equipment on the current Centrex system that would need to be replaced in the next five years. It also should be noted that having new phones and the same type of phone across the county will reduce in house maintenance costs.

Another cost that was not included in the ROI was the replacement of the network core switches that currently are part of the County's data network. Replacement of the core switches is included in the proposal to assure quality of service. The proposed system replaces all of the switches in the Government Data Center, Social Services, Public Health CVBH, ARC, and Justice Center. The current 3-Com switches are now 5 years old and will need to be replaced in the next two years. Current technology needs are demanding a higher level of performance than the current switches can provide. Further expansion of services, like wireless access for the County buildings, will be limited by the 3-Com switches. The approval of this proposal will result in a cost avoidance of approximately \$200,000 for switch replacement.

The table below outlines projected savings from the project:

Year	(Savings or Cost Avoidance)/Additional Costs
1	(\$25,872.48)
2	\$26,927.52
3	\$26,927.52
4	\$26,927.52
5	\$26,927.52
Cost Avoidance – Switches	(\$200,000)
Total (Savings)/Additional Cost resulting from project	(\$118,162.40)

It should also be noted that in year 6, monthly cost will drop from \$30,486.53 per month with full maintenance to \$11,484 with full maintenance. This will be a savings of \$14,602.53 per month over what the County is currently paying for phone service. This reduction in cost is due to the equipment (switches and VoIP system) being paid for.

Another plus of the proposed system is that additional layers of redundancy are added. The current Centrex system is a separate network. If BellSouth were to suffer a catastrophic switch failure, the County would be without phone service. Under the new design, two networks are combined that will function on their own in the event of a Centrex or Local Area Network (LAN) failure. The new unified communications platform actually has three call managers, two at the Government Center, and one at Social Services. Both will be connected to the Centrex system using separate paths. If the Wide Area Network (WAN) connection fails, all calls are routed out to the Centrex lines. If the Centrex line fails, the calls are routed to the other call manager and out to that Centrex side.

The proposed system is also a building block for the future. It allows for the phone system to interact with many of the standard tools on the market today such as Blackberries, PDAs, pagers, and email.

It embraces the convergence of voice, video and data making it easy to move between these media and combine them in applications. It also opens the possibility of interacting with public safety radio systems. And a very important building block is that it will allow us a lot of flexibility when it comes to setting up emergency operations. Using IP technology, phones can be located anywhere on our network and the user will be recognized. In an emergency situation, an EOC could be setup at any location on the County WAN in a matter of minutes. If a building was destroyed, operations for that building could be moved to another building and communications restored very quickly.

Two general questions about VoIP are "Is it running on the Internet" and "Are there problems locating the caller when they call E911?" The proposed system does not run on the Internet. It runs on our internal WAN thus maintaining the security of the system. For E911, traditional phone lines have been left in place in case of an emergency. Any phone that dials 911 will be routed out the traditional line for that building and can be located by the E911 Communications Center.

General Statute 143-129 allows an exemption from formal bidding for purchase contracts when performance or price competition for a product is not available; when a needed product is available from only one source of supply; or when standardization or compatibility is the overriding consideration. This exemption requires governing board approval and a record must be maintained of purchases made under this exemption.

County staff contacted the School of Government to inquire if a VoIP project with BellSouth would qualify as a sole source exemption since the County still had 15 remaining months in its Centrex agreement. The response was if the County wanted to obtain a VoIP phone system now and the only way it could obtain a system was through its current provider and the only way the current provider can supply a VoIP system is with equipment and the County can't bid the equipment, then it is a sole source. Since the County is in an agreement with BellSouth with fifteen months remaining, the County can't bid the equipment.

Commissioner Beatty confirmed that the old and new system would work concurrently until the County was assured that the new system was operational. She also asked if the new system was a building block to other services that may be offered in the future. Mr. Bledsoe confirmed that the proposed system was an industry standard and state of the art and at least 7 years of service was guaranteed. Chair Barnes reiterated that this system was not truly over the internet but on our own lines/local area network and Mr. Bledsoe explained that Voice Over IP just means internet protocol – just the language it is speaking – and the system will be confined inside the County's own network. Commissioner Beatty added that the security of the proposed system would be improved from the current system. Commissioner Barger noted the monetary savings from the proposed system and made a motion to authorize the sole source exemption for the VoIP phone system from BellSouth. The motion carried unanimously.

10. Other Items of Business.

County Manager Lundy presented the proposed goals for the Board of Commissioners for Fiscal Year 2008. He noted that the Board of Commissioners have always started the process of identifying goals early because the goals are part of the instructions given to the staff when developing a budget. Mr. Lundy said there are a lot of competing projects which vie for the Board's attention in both time and resources the Board controls. Mr. Lundy explained that the Commissioners submit goals that are of interest to each of them, they are compiled and are then redistributed to the Board members and they are then ranked. The following were the proposed goals which were the result of that ranking and recommended by the Policy and Public Works Subcommittee:

1. Continue economic development efforts for sustainable businesses and industry, which will provide employment for Catawba County citizens. Partner with the Economic Development Corporation, Chamber of Commerce, FORESIGHT, business community and municipalities to carry out this goal.
 - a. Support the concept of a multi-jurisdictional park involving interested municipalities, and be receptive to needed rezoning requests
 - b. Continue to develop public-private partnerships and funding for the Eco-Complex;
 - c. Support the Chamber of Commerce in its efforts to support small business.

2. Partner with the three school systems, Champions of Education, CVCC and the HMHEC to increase the educational attainment level in Catawba County.
 - a. Continue implementation of the FORESIGHT educational strategies;
 - b. Support the work of the Champions of Education;
 - c. Support legislation that will increase educational performance, such as encouraging students to remain in school and the ½ cent sales tax for school construction and operating needs;
 - d. Review the progress of students as the result of additional funds given for teacher supplements and other current expense--for example, graduation rates, dropouts, programs to increase student performance;
 - e. Support CVCC as it works regionally to align programs with area community colleges;
 - f. Support expansion of the offerings at the HMHEC and the development of the UNC Engineering Center;
 - g. Work to ensure that the efforts of all of the higher education institutions are coordinated.
3. Continue efforts to inform and engage citizens and ensure good customer service, using technology where appropriate.
 - a. Continue implementation of the public information strategy endorsed by the Board during its retreat held May 12 and 13, 2006, and research and implement additional appropriate strategies to engage the citizenry and provide public information in a variety of formats;
 - b. Hold board or community meetings in different parts of the County at least three times in the upcoming year.
4. Position the County to respond to anticipated growth.
 - a. Develop a long-range plan for service delivery, and at what level, so budgets can be modified to deal with the growth;
 - b. Develop a comprehensive, 8-year capital improvement plan for County services.

Chair Barnes noted that these are a repeat in many ways of what was outlined in the FORESIGHT Report but they have been expanded and the Board has tried to move forward on other issues within the County. Vice-Chair Hunsucker made a motion to adopt the proposed goals. The motion carried unanimously.

11. Attorneys' Report. None.
12. Manager's Report. County Manager Lundy requested the Board consider a closed session pursuant to General Statute 143-318.11(a)(6) for the personnel exception. He did not anticipate any public action after the closed session. Vice-Chair Hunsucker made a motion to move into closed session. The motion carried unanimously. The Board moved into closed session at 8:06 p.m.
13. The Board returned to open session at 8:45 p.m. Commissioner Glenn Barger made a motion to adjourn at 8:46 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Katherine W. Barnes, Chair
Board of Commissioners

Barbara E. Morris, County Clerk